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**"SPACE WEAPON" CONCEPT DISCUSSED AT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
LUNCHEON ON NOVEMBER 1, 1957**

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**Scope:**

Research and exploratory development on weapons operating above the earth's atmosphere, and defense against such weapons.

**Concept:**

Operating under the Secretary of Defense, and with his authoritative backing, a scientific laboratory (comparable with Radiation Laboratory at MIT and Los Alamos Laboratory under the University of California in concept) to deal with research and exploratory development in the area above indicated.

It is assumed that the new organization would start off on a modest basis with just one or a few top-grade scientists studying the problems involved and mapping out plans to be built up with personnel and facilities as the program develops.

In order to have the latitude to bring in top-grade people, it is contemplated that the operation would be by contract with a non-profit organization such as a university, an association of universities, or an organization like the Carnegie Institute.

The new laboratory organization would be separate from, and non-interfering with, the present Military Department research and development programs for ICBM and IRBM (including POLARIS and VANGUARD). Quite

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probably any reconnaissance satellite program that is authorized would, at least for the time being, be separate from the new laboratory. As soon as it was competent to do so, the new laboratory would be asked to assume responsibility for the anti-missile missile program (AICBM).

In its progressive build-up to an ultimate capability of assuming the whole Department of Defense research and exploratory development responsibility in long-range ballistic missiles, military satellites, and defense against such weapons, the new laboratory would avail itself in maximum degree of existing personnel, facilities and organizations, both within the government and within industry, universities, and other non-profit organizations. It would recruit new personnel and be provided with new additional facilities only as necessary to supplement present resources that could be made available to it.

The philosophy of this concept is to start now building up a laboratory competence of the highest grade which eventually would be able to assume the responsibility for an integrated program in its field. To do this effectively it would have to have a call on some of the most competent young scientists in the country, and it would have to have Defense Department backing to make proper resources available to the new laboratory and to insure that Military Department programs were properly related to the program carried by the new laboratory.

The Department of Defense contract with the non-profit organization that would assume the overall responsibility for the new laboratory would provide for administrative support as well as for technical personnel and facilities.

The new laboratory would not be expected to play more than a secondary role in the development of the current line of ballistic missiles; in fact, its participation in these programs would be limited to those situations in which the program directors would seek the help of the new laboratory (or the Secretary of Defense would direct that such help be given). While the AICBM work would have to be continued, under control, in its present environment until the new laboratory could be in a position to assume this responsibility, it would be an objective of the new plan to make such a transition at the earliest practicable date. The relationship of the new laboratory to satellite programs, including the reconnaissance satellite, would be a matter for later determination with the general expectation that the new laboratory would assume a large part of the responsibility for projects of this kind when and as it acquires a competence to do so.

Since the laboratory would be an OSD agency and would limit its operations to research and exploratory development, it would not affect Military Department roles and missions. It would be understood that a

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Military Department having a need for an item that had been carried through the exploratory development stage in the laboratory would pick the item up at that point and arrange for the completion of the development and the production of it to meet its Service needs (and the needs of other Military Departments that might require it, on a cross-servicing basis).

The financing of the laboratory would be from funds appropriated to the Secretary of Defense and available for the purpose.

The above is a statement of a concept for consideration and discussion and is not a recommendation.